



Office of the Commissioner
Community and Health Services

Memorandum

To: Committee of the Whole

From: Katherine Chislett
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

Date: August 9, 2018

Re: **Opening Doors Together: Social Services First Activity Update
2017**

York Region is the Service System Manager on behalf of the Province of Ontario for both children's services, and homelessness prevention and housing stability services. In addition, the Region is also the Service Administrator for Ontario Works. In fulfilling York Region's Service System Manager role, York Region's Social Services Branch (Social Services) oversees the planning, development, implementation and delivery of these services to achieve important results for residents.

Social Services promotes stability and independence for York Region residents in need of financial and employment support, experiencing or at risk of homelessness as well as families and children with special needs and those living with low income. A variety of services, supports and partnerships are available to help people across the Region.

This memorandum highlights accomplishments made possible with Council's support in the first Social Services Activity Update, *Opening Doors Together*, (Attachment 1). *Opening Doors Together* also includes an overview of the Social Services Branch and the positive impact of programs, services and partnerships for residents.

Social Services helps residents find and keep employment, prevent homelessness and promote housing stability and afford basic needs so they can contribute to the economy

By providing targeted financial support, tools and resources, the Branch helps residents contribute to the economy. Residents are supported to become and remain employed, and/or have adequate income to afford housing and basic needs, and have the capacity to remain stable and as independent as possible. Examples of positive outcomes for York Region residents who were supported by Social Services in 2017 include:

- 9,824 families could afford child care so parents were able to work or attend training through Child Care Fee Subsidy. For most of 2017, the waitlist was the lowest it has been since 2012
- An estimated 10,000 people received financial support from Ontario Works so they could afford to meet their basic needs
- For 1,585 households, homelessness was either prevented or housing was secured through the Housing Stability Program

Programs and services enhance residents' social and emotional health, build life skills and promote inclusion so they can stay socially engaged

When residents are socially engaged, they are well-informed, connected, have positive social interactions and feel both valued and included. Social engagement is a key component of residents' overall wellbeing and contributes to building healthy, strong communities. By providing both direct support and referrals to community partners, in 2017 examples of outcomes that were achieved include:

- 1,500 youth and women received support on life skills development, housing retention, recreational activities and additional community services through drop-in services at the Richmond Hill Youth Hub and Belinda's Place
- 3,911 children with special needs received Early Intervention Services to support inclusion and improve their social and emotional health; 29 per cent increase over 2016
- After-school programs supported the social, emotional, physical and mental health needs of almost 250 children and youth. This helped build life skills and confidence to succeed in school, with 86 per cent of participants reporting positive life changes

By decreasing waitlists, providing individualized wraparound supports and building the capacity of community partners, residents benefit from high-quality services

High-quality services are responsive, accessible and coordinated within a broader system of supports. Examples of results that were accomplished in 2017 by building partnerships and working together include:

- Increased ability of staff to identify services that wraparound the client to support their specific needs. This approach resulted in 93 per cent of 1,083 households

that were homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness remaining housed for at least six months through the Housing Stability Program

- The waitlist for Early Intervention Services decreased by 53 per cent (from 134 families in 2016 to 63 families in 2017) allowing children with special needs and their families to be supported faster
- 59 residents with complex mental health needs received Psychosocial/Psychovocational assessments so they could access key services to best meet their needs and become stable

To support continuous improvement, Social Services is committed to evaluating results on an ongoing basis to determine how residents are better off as a result of Branch programs and services.

With population growth and increasing diversity, the needs of York Region's residents are changing. Social Services is continuously innovating and adapting. By working together with key partners and delivering services that are accessible, responsive and high-quality, Social Services can continue to support greater economic independence and stability for York Region residents.

Katherine Chislett
Commissioner, Community and Health
Services Department

KC/cs

Attachment (1)

#8600455

OPENING DOORS Together

**SOCIAL SERVICES
ACTIVITY UPDATE 2017**

Community and Health Services

Social Services Staff are Making a Positive Difference in Residents' Lives

"This career is very rewarding because I genuinely enjoy helping people. I am able to develop lasting relationships with my clients, provide them with the financial tools, training and support they need, and watch them grow and accomplish new goals. **I believe that every person has the potential to achieve their goals, and I'm happy to have the opportunity to help them get there."**

- Anetta

Social Assistance Case Coordinator



What we do and why

Each year, York Region's Community and Health Services, Social Services Branch helps more than 50,000 residents from all walks of life. We promote stability and independence for each person we serve. This positions them to better participate in our communities and the economy.

We focus on assisting eligible York Region residents who need support with:

- Financial insecurity
- Finding stable housing
- Overcoming barriers to employment
- Securing licensed child care or recreation programs
- Inclusion of children with special needs

Our approach

We are people-centred. Each person we serve has their own unique needs and challenges. We are working hard to ensure our services are more personalized and offer wraparound supports that look at the person as a whole.

We are committed to helping our residents:

- Contribute to the economy
- Become and stay socially engaged
- Benefit from high-quality services

We want to partner with each person we serve to actively participate in their own success so we can open doors together.

This update demonstrates how the work we do each day adds up to real differences in the lives of the individuals and families that we support.

Partnering to help others

We don't do this alone. Social Services is about connecting people to the right supports, and partnerships are a big part of our successes. We work closely with our Community and Health Services colleagues, other York Region staff, residents, local agencies, employers, and community and municipal partners to ensure we are meeting the needs of our community.

Supporting the Complexities in Residents' Lives

When a crisis occurs in someone's life such as sudden job loss or family breakdown, our dedicated and passionate staff help to get them back on their feet as quickly as possible.

"The personal understanding and kindness of staff is priceless."

- Social Services client



Helping residents find and/or keep stable housing

We work to prevent homelessness and promote housing stability for residents who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Through personalized wraparound supports, we connect people to the right supports and resources to become stable.

We manage a system of services to prevent, reduce and help end homelessness in our communities.

Homelessness Community Programs:

- Outreach Services
- Emergency and Transitional Housing, Drop-in and Aftercare Services
- Housing with Supports
- Short-Term Assistance for Renters Program
- Housing Stability Program
- Home Now Program
- Integrated Support Program
- Homemakers and Nurses Services

Supporting basic needs and promoting financial independence

We help people meet basic needs and get work to support their financial independence.

It's more than just handing out a cheque. We look at the person as a whole and provide referrals to address their personal and professional barriers.

Integrated Financial and Employment Supports:

- Financial assistance through Ontario Works
- Referrals to Regional and community supports
- Assistance with employment-readiness

It Starts with Kids

We work to support all children so they have an equal opportunity to be included and participate in early learning, child care and recreation programs in our communities.

We work with partners to build a Region-wide system of early years services that offer high-quality, accessible, inclusive, and affordable options for families.

Integrated Children's Services:

- Child Care Fee Subsidy
- Child Care Service Agreement Funding
- Recreation and After-School Programs
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- All Our Kids (AOK) Programs
- Infant and Child Development Services
- Inclusion Support Services
- Therapy Services
- Neonatal Follow-up Clinics
- Family Strengthening Programs

2017 Highlights



Supported **10,000** people through Ontario Works so they can **afford basic needs**



513 York Region child care providers received wage enhancement funding for Early Childhood Educators so they could offer **safe and inclusive licensed child care to all families**



214 residents with an illness or disability **remained independent in their homes** and avoided more costly crisis supports through the Homemakers and Nurses Services Program



Helped **9,824** families **afford child care so parents can go to school or work** through Child Care Fee Subsidy



855 residents **increased their confidence** in their ability to find a job through help from community supports focused on economic independence



Ensured those families most in need – those with incomes below **\$36,000** annually – received the Child Care Fee Subsidy with **no wait time**



For **1,585** households, **homelessness was prevented or housing was secured** through the Housing Stability Program



1,140 Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program clients received transit discount vouchers so they could **go to work**



440 residents in emergency housing **moved into long-term housing and are no longer homeless**



Helping Residents Contribute to the Economy

We provide financial support, help people find and keep housing, and provide services that support families in their employment to achieve their educational goals. This work is essential in helping residents contribute to the economy.

“I am passionate about making a difference in a person’s life.

When residents need our support, they are often in a crisis or have a desperate need. By giving them the right tools, resources and having a positive outlook, **I have seen the changes first-hand – and it is so rewarding.”**

- Dissanee

*Social Assistance Case Coordinator
– Hostels*

Helping Residents stay Socially Engaged

We listen to residents' stories to better understand what they need. By providing one-on-one support and referrals to community supports, people can connect with others and become socially engaged. This in turn helps them to become more stable in their lives.

"I truly believe that it takes a village to raise a family. I see my role in York Region as being part of that village. I am passionate about programs that are responsive to families' needs and provide opportunities for engagement. By developing strong relationships in the community, families can feel both valued and included. Seeing families participate in programs on a daily basis and **seeing the difference we make in their lives is what drives me...this is success!"**

- Kelly
*Program Coordinator,
Community Initiatives*



2017 Highlights



3,911 children with special needs received Early Intervention Services (a 29% increase over 2016) to **support inclusion, improve the social and emotional health of children**, and reduce stress for families



83% of residents say they **increased their confidence in advocating and caring for their child** as a result of Infant and Child Development Services



Funded **3,382** specialized toys and equipment focused on sensory exploration and play-based learning to **support inclusion for all children** attending licensed child care



Helped **1,500** youth and women access drop-in services (**life skills development, housing retention, recreational activities, community supports**) through the Richmond Hill Youth Hub and Belinda's Place



After-school programs supported the scholastic, social, emotional, physical and mental health needs of almost **250** children and youth ages six to 17. This helped them to **build life skills, confidence, and to succeed in school**



86% of after-school program participants reported **tangible positive life changes**

"Accessing Child Care Fee Subsidy allowed me to focus heavily on studying and job searching, which in turn landed me a great role at a very reputable organization. Without this help, I do not think this would have been possible."

- Social Services client

Ensuring Residents Benefit from High-Quality Services

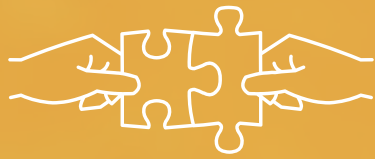
We provide services that are responsive, accessible and continuously improved to support the needs of our residents.

“I have the privilege of coming into work each day and working collaboratively with clients, often in their most vulnerable moments, to find hopeful solutions. Using an integrated approach, I help to empower clients as they reach their goals through counselling and connecting them to resources, which is very gratifying.”

- Michele
Social Worker



2017 Highlights



Decreased the waitlist for Early Intervention Services by **53%** to **support children with special needs and families faster**



Doubled the number of child care centres receiving Inclusion Support Services to **ensure children of all abilities can attend child care**



Helped **93%** of households that were homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness **remain housed through one-time financial assistance and ongoing wraparound supports** from the Housing Stability Program



Supported **59** residents with complex mental health needs **access key services to best meet their needs and become stable** through Psychosocial/Psychovocational assessments



Worked with internal partners including the Privacy Office to **implement a Common Consent** for homelessness services so residents do not have to tell their story **multiple** times to multiple different staff across programs



Delivered e-learning sessions to **128** early learning and care professionals to **build their capacity to support children of varying abilities**. 99% felt confident in applying the inclusion strategies in their work

"Our accomplishments in our new home of Canada were made possible by Social Services."

- Social Services client



Doubled the capacity of the Integrated Support Program to **support more residents with complex needs**

Looking Ahead and Continuous Improvement

Our residents' needs are continuously evolving – and we must too. We are developing an even more efficient and coordinated system of integrated and accessible supports to ensure residents are better off. On the next page are some plans for adding and coordinating programs and services in the coming years.

“Through my work in social policy, I help residents have access to the right supports and benefits that empower them to reach their fullest potential. This means understanding the issues they face and working with key partners to develop services or strategies to best support their needs. **Good social policy is the foundation for safe communities, a strong workforce and vibrant economy, and healthy people.”**

- Tim,
*Ontario Works Transformation
Initiatives Advisor*



Homelessness Community Programs:

Improve Access Homelessness Services

In partnerships with services across the Region, we are introducing a Coordinated Access System as a single place where anyone in York Region can get homelessness prevention and housing stability services and information.

We are also introducing a “By-Names List” for those experiencing homelessness to support the coordination of programs and services and help address homelessness in York Region.

It’s about giving the right support at the right time to resolve residents’ housing crises as quickly as possible.

Emergency Housing Diversion Program

Diversion will enable more residents to avoid costly crisis services including emergency housing, by linking them with supports in the community to address their housing instability before they lose their home.

Integrated Financial and Employment Supports:

Enhancements to Ontario Works Service Delivery to Serve Residents Better

As residents’ needs are becoming more complex, delivering people-centred wraparound service is increasingly important.

Enhancements will be made to the way Ontario Works is delivered to make it more efficient and accessible and better support our residents’ needs.

Integrated Children’s Services:

Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan

We are creating a plan to further strengthen the child care and early years system so all children and families in York Region have access to responsive, affordable and high-quality services.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

We are overseeing and expanding EarlyON centres, which deliver free programs for parents, caregivers and children from birth to six years old.

These centres and programs will be accessible, inclusive and responsive to York Region’s diverse population and contribute to healthy child development.

Support the Expansion of Inclusive Child Care in York Region

We will support greater access to inclusive child care services so parents can participate in the workforce or attend training.



Be the change you
the world.

-Mahatma Gandhi

- Phil
Supervisor,
Hostel Programs

ou wish to see in



- Cathy
Manager, Infant and Child
Development Services

We are committed to better outcomes for the people we serve in partnership with colleagues in York Region and the community. We do this through our three divisions:

Homelessness Community Programs:

Through our work, residents have access to one of the most important and basic needs – stable housing. By preventing homelessness and supporting housing stability, we promote lasting positive change in residents' lives.

Integrated Financial and Employment Supports:

Every resident should have their basic needs met. We provide basic financial assistance and help people become as stable and independent as possible so they can in turn contribute to the economy and their communities.

Integrated Children's Services:

Supporting children in their early years can have lasting impacts on whole communities. By starting with kids, we help families build the future so that residents contribute to the economy and are socially engaged later in life.

Social Services works with its partners in Community and Health Services to deliver programs and services in a holistic and people-centred way to support York Region residents.

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Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request.

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“By empowering, educating and supporting families, we make an impact in the life of a child and the potential trajectory of the family. We make a difference, and that matters.”

- Sara,
*Behaviour Project Lead -
Early Interventionist*